

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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R 281000Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4777

S E C R E T JIDDA 3701

EXDIS

DEPT PASS DIA FOR VICE ADMIRAL DE POIX ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, EG

SUBJ: DISCUSSION WITH PRINCE SULTAN ON OPERATION OF SAUDI
AIR FORCE C-130'S

REF: JIDDA 3335

1. THOUGHT IT BEST TAKE ADVANTAGE MY AUGUST 26 MEETING WITH SULTAN RECALL TO HIM THAT WE STILL KEEPING CLOSE WATCH ON SAUDI AIR FORCE METHOD OF OPERATING C-130'S WHICH HAD BEEN UNDERTAKING HUMANITARIAN MISSIONS IN EGYPT. REMINDED SUTLAN AGAIN QUITE VIGOROUSLY, AND WITH SOME EXPLICIT DETAIL, OF DANGERS FOR OVERALL SAUDI-US MILITARY RELATIONS WHICH ANY SLIPPAGE IN THIS SPHERE MIGHT ENTAIL. POINTED OUT TO HIM INCREASING INTEREST IN US CONGRESS ON THIS SUBJECT, FACT WHICH HEIGHTENS IMPORTANCE OF ABSOLUTELY CORRECT MANAGEMENT OF ANY SAUDI C-130'S THAT MIGHT BE DISPATCHED TO BE OF HELP TO SAUDI NEIGHBORS. ADVERSE EVIDENCE COULD CAUSE GREATEST DIFFICULTY IN RELATIONS BETWEEN US.

2. SULTAN NODDED UNDERSTANDING AND DECLARED TOPIC HAD BEENBROACHED BY SAUDIS WITH PRESIDENT SADAT DURING LATTER'S RECENT VISIT. IT APPEARED THAT PLANES (WHICH BADLY NEEDED BY RSAF) HAD ON OCCASION REMAINED IDLE FOR CONSIDERABLE PERIODS OF TIME AT EGYPTIAN AIRFIELDS. SAUDI
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PROBLEM HAD BEEN CAREFULLY EXPLAINED TO SADAT, WHO STATED HE RECOGNIZED POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES AND WISHED SAG BE FREE ANY SENSE OF OBLIGATION PERFORM ANY TASK WHICH MIGHT BRING RISK OR EMBARRASSMENT TO SAUDIS IN

RELATIONS WITH US. SULTAN PROMISED THAT FROM NOW ON
AIRCRAFT WOULD BE REMAINING MUCH MORE IN JIDDA. THERE
WOULD BE NO MORE PLACING OF EGYPTIAN MARKINGS ON THEM
AND IN FACT, SAUDI GOVT NOW IN POSITION OPERATE PLANES
IN MANNER WHOLLY CONSISTENT ITS OWN INTERESTS AND
OBLIGATIONS UNDERTAKEN TO USG.
THACHER

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED DIA

SECRET

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 10 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973JIDDA03701
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P750008-1817
From: JIDDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730869/abqcefgs.tel
Line Count: 66
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS ONLY
Reference: JIDDA 3335
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07-Jan-2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <23-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DISCUSSION WITH PRINCE SULTAN ON OPERATION OF SAUDI AIR FORCE C-130'S
TAGS: MASS, SA, EG
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005